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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/688,433	10/17/2003	Juan J. Becerra	107044-0040	1554

24267 7590 11/09/2006

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EXAMINER

KALAFUT, STEPHEN J

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1745

DATE MAILED: 11/09/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/688,433

Applicant(s)

BECERRA ET AL.

Examiner

Stephen J. Kalafut

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 August 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☐ Claim(s) 1, 3-18, 20-27 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 14, 15, 20, 21 and 23-26 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1, 3-13, 16-18, 22 and 27 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) 4 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- ☐ Other: _____

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The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claims 1, 3, 10-12 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Wesley *et al.* (US 5,773,706), for reasons of record.

Claims 13, 16-19 and 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kanehara *et al.* (JP 2-234,538), for reasons of record.

Claims 3, 5, 6, 8 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wesley *et al.*, for reasons of record.

Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wesley *et al.* in view of Berté *et al.* (US 5,744,694), for reasons of record.

Claims 14, 15, 20, 21 and 23-26 are allowed. Claims 14, 15, 20 and 21 were objected to in the previous office action, but are now not dependent on rejected claims. Claims 23-26 are allowed for reasons of record.

Claim 4 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and

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any intervening claims. The prior art does not disclose a fuel substantially comprising neat methanol and a hydrophobically modified crosslinked polyacrylate thickening substance.

Applicant's arguments filed 29 August 2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicants argue that Wesley *et al.* do not disclose neat methanol, but instead teaches that the component should contain aqueous methanol, as in table 4. This is not persuasive because the composition in table 4 is an example, and as such does not constitute the limits of the Wesley *et al.* disclosure. They also teach water content as low as “about 0” (column 3, lines 11-13). Since the present claims recite that the fuel substance is “substantially comprised”, and not consisting, of neat methanol, the claim does not necessarily exclude small amounts of water as low as “about 0”. The various dependent claims recite additional components that would be present as being mixed with the methanol, thus indicating that the phrase “substantially comprised” is not totally closed.

Applicants argue that Kanehara *et al.* do not teach a replaceable cartridge. Claim 13 does not recite a replaceable cartridge but a replaceable “compartment”. Even so, the term “replaceable” does not require that the cartridge is separable from the rest of the fuel cell. The fuel cell, including the fuel compartment, may be replaced as a single unit. Thus, all of its components are replaceable.

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

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A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Stephen J. Kalafut whose telephone number is 571-272-1286. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 8:00 am-4:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick J. Ryan can be reached on 571-272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

sjk


STEPHEN KALAFATIS
PRIMARY EXAMINER
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